

THE GLOBE DRAMA

ALL THE WORLD'S
ON A STAGE

The Cool Collegians.

BY MILES MEDIC.

BOSTON:

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31. **THE YOUNG MAN.** A Farce in 1 Act. By W. E. Suter. 3 male, 3 female char.
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36. **DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.** An Interlude in 1 Act. By W. H. Murray. 10 male, 1 female char.
37. **LOOK AFTER BROWN.** A Farce in 1 Act. By George A. Stuart, M. D. 6 male, 1 female char.
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39. **A VERY PLEASANT EVENING.** A Farce in 1 Act. By W. E. Suter. 3 male char.
40. **BROTHER BEN.** A Farce in 1 Act. By M. Morton. 3 male, 3 female char.
41. **ONLY A CLCD.** A Comic Drama in 1 Act. By J. P. Simpson. 4 male, 1 female char.
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46. **MARY MOO; or, Which shall I Marry?** A Farce in 1 Act. By W. E. Suter. 2 male, 1 female char.
47. **EAST LYNNE.** A Drama in 5 Acts. 8 male, 7 female char.
48. **THE HIDDEN HAND.** A Drama in 5 Acts. By Robert Jones. 16 male, 7 female char.
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58. **WHICH WILL HAVE HIM?** A Vaudeville. 1 male, 2 female char.
59. **MADAM IS ABED.** A Vaudeville in 1 Act. 2 male, 2 female char.
60. **THE ANONYMOUS KISS.** A Vaudeville. 2 male, 2 female char.
61. **THE CLEFT STICK.** A Comedy in 3 Acts. 5 male, 3 female char.
62. **A SOLDIER, A SAILOR, A TINKER, AND A TAILOR.** A Farce in 1 Act. 4 male, 2 female char.
63. **GIVE A DOG A BAD NAME.** A Farce. 2 male, 2 female char.
64. **DAMON AND PYTHIAS.** A Farce. 6 male, 4 female char.
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See on application to

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THE
COOL COLLEGIANS

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

BY
MILES MEDIC

William Henry Holmes



BOSTON
GEORGE M. BAKER & COMPANY

1883

PS 1654
F46

CHARACTERS.

HARRY MEREDITH,	}		College chums.
FRED PARKS,			
MRS. HUNTOON			Fred's aunt.
FANNY MORRISON			Her niece.
MOLLIE WAINWRIGHT			Fanny's friend.
MUGGINS			Colored servant.
KATE			Irish servant.

LIST OF PROPERTIES.

Bundle of Papers and Letters.	Tray and Dishes.
Bunch of Cigarettes.	Duster, Bag, etc.
Matches.	Spectacles.
Note-book and Pencil.	Photographs.
Calling Cards.	Music.

COSTUMES MODERN AND APPROPRIATE.

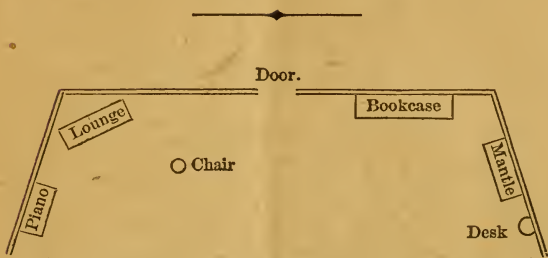
Time, one hour.

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12-36721

THE COOL COLLEGIANS.

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS.



ACT I.

SCENE.—*Student's room with table or desk, piano, bookcase, chairs, etc. FRED sitting at desk, reading letter. MUGGINS dusting room vigorously.*

FRED. Confound the luck! This knocks my summer's fun clear out of time. I wish she and her niece were in Tophet. Phew-ah-ahtch! (*Coughs and sneezes.* MUGGINS *dusts table, and sends paper flying.*) What are you trying to do, you black rascal? (*Rises.*)

MUGGINS. I—I—begs yer pardon, I does, Massa Fred. But I only done did jus' as yer tole me.

FRED. Well, all right. But keep that infernal thing out of my face. I'm not quite dust to dust yet. Dost hear?

MUGGINS (*startled, begins edging toward door*). Dar, dar, dat'll do, Massa Fred. I'se puffectly willin' to be buffitud and swored at. But please don' do dat agin.

FRED (*laughing*). All right, blacky. But hold on a minute. If you see Harry anywhere about, send him up and —

MUGGINS. Yaas, Massa Fred. (*Dodges out, slamming door.*)

FRED. Hold on, Muggins!

MUGGINS (*putting head in door*). Sah?

FRED. And bring up a bunch of cigarettes.

MUGGINS. Yaas, Massa Fred. (*Slams door.*)

FRED. Confound the fellow! — Muggins, come in here!

MUGGINS. Sah?

FRED. Bring up some cigarettes and —

MUGGINS. All right, massa. I done hear you say dat afore. (*Slams door.*)

FRED (*excitedly*). Muggins, you rascal, come in here and stay here.

MUGGINS (*eying FRED, and leaving door open for escape.*) Sah?

FRED (*grasping him by collar*). There, stand still and hear what I have to say. Bring up some cigarettes and a siphon of soda; and to-night I shall want you to pack my trunk, I suppose. Now you may go. (*All this time MUGGINS makes starts for door, FRED restraining him.*)

MUGGINS. Yaas, Massa Fred. (*Slams door. Exit.*)

FRED (*throwing himself into chair*). Confound the fellow! He's as uneasy as though he'd swallowed a spring-mattress. (*Looks at watch.*) Hallo! half-past three. Now what am I to do about this letter? (*Begins reading.*)

(*Enter MUGGINS.*)

MUGGINS (*bowing awkwardly*). Massa Fred.

FRED. Well, what is it, Muggins?

MUGGINS. Please, massa, I wasn't watching you werry close: did — did yer wink when yer spoke about dat sody?

FRED. Wink, you rascal? No! Get out of this. (*Starts for him. Exit MUGGINS, laughing.*)

FRED (*returns to his letter*). Now for it: "So many years since I have seen you — my niece — must come this summer" — bosh! (*Throws letter on table, and sits at piano.*) What the dickens made the old lady flash up just at this time? Heigho! luck's against me. (*Drums on piano.*) If she'd only waited a day longer, I'd have been safe and sound in Saratoga, and she might whistle.

(*HARRY heard coming outside, singing some college song.*)

FRED *joins him with piano. Enter HARRY. They sing the chorus together.*)

HARRY. Well, my most noble Roman, how goes it?

FRED. Where've you been all the afternoon?

HARRY *(leaning on piano)*. The categorical quality of your answer staggers me. I've been along with the gang down in Ben Otis's room. By the way, he's tumbled on a new wrinkle in cigarettes: try one. *(Throws him a bunch.)*

FRED. Thanks. *(Lights one.)* Old man, here's a letter I want you to read.

HARRY *(takes it, and looks at it)*. Oh, blow the letter! it's too long. Tell it to me, dearie. *(Sits at desk.)*

FRED. Well, you remember that aunt of mine?

HARRY. Well, no: I can hardly say I do.

FRED. Why, yes, — that one down in Duxbury.

HARRY. Oh! the one that hasn't seen you since you were a little shaver?

FRED. Yes. That's the one.

HARRY. Cert, I remember. Proceed, young one.

FRED. Well, she's written that she wants me to make her a long visit this summer. Duty to relations, respect, and all that sort of thing, you know. She offers, as a possible inducement, the opportunity of meeting her beloved niece. And all this comes just as I had arranged for another summer at Saratoga with Mollie Wainwright.

HARRY *(reflectively)*. It's a corker, and no mistake.

FRED. What would you do?

HARRY. Oh, I don't know: 'twould depend a great deal which place I preferred.

FRED. Good Lord, man! you can't suppose for an instant that I want to be stewed up all summer with an old tabby and her companion. Not any in mine, please.

HARRY. Well, then, I don't see but what that settles it in favor of Saratoga, and the gay and festive Mollie. By the way, I trust this is nothing serious. Let me see. She's lasted nearly a year. Look out, sonny: she's an accomplished flirt.

FRED. Oh, blow that! But what shall I say?

HARRY. My dear boy, for once in your life say No. I am painfully aware that your attempts at the negative are lamentable failures. Now, brace radically. You can see now, perhaps, how my way is better than yours. Do as I do, and you'll wear diamonds. If I don't want to buy a ticket to this

or that concert or minstrel-show, I simply wave off the fair applicant: "I've no use for such things." An invitation to a wedding or some such racket comes. If I want to go, which is not usually the case, I go: otherwise not, don't pay any attention to it, ignore it completely. Soon you blossom out as an eccentricity. This opinion, if judiciously fostered, will save you manifold vexations. And if by chance you do condescend to adorn a gathering, — I don't mean a boil, — behold, you are a lion. It pays, old boy, it pays; it's a great scheme.

FRED (*who has been listening abstractedly*). By Jove, I have it!

HARRY (*pathetically, aside*). All that valuable advice lost! (*Aloud.*) You don't say so. What?

FRED. An idea.

HARRY. Ah, yes! (*Pulling out a note-book.*) Happy mortal! Shall it be entered in the archives — or — how?

FRED. Don't wax sarcastic, old man. But come, you can help me out, and I can satisfy all parties.

HARRY. Now, really, you can't mean it.

FRED. Yes, I do. Now see here. (*Draws chair up to him.*) You know my aunt hasn't seen me since I was a boy.

HARRY. A little, little boy. (*Sings à la Patience.*)

FRED. Just have a little patience, will you? She wouldn't know me from Adam. Now we are about the same size and complexion.

HARRY (*rises, and stands in front of mantle, warming himself*). Hold on there: I object in large letters. Not but what the idea is excellent, but let some other fellow carry it out. I'll take mine without sugar.

FRED. No, you are just the man. Haven't made any plans for the summer. Come (*going to him*), just help me out this once. All you have to do is to take my name.

HARRY. Well, but —

(*Enter MUGGINS followed by two ladies.*)

MUGGINS. Two ladies to see Massa Fred Parks. (*Hands Fred cards.*)

FRED (*reads. Aside*). Mrs. Huntoon, Miss Fanny Morrison. My aunt, by thunder!

MRS. HUNTOON. My dear, dear nephew! (*Offers to embrace him.*)

HARRY (*who has been about departing, takes in situation*). FRED stands awkwardly. (*Aside.*) His aunt, for all I'm

worth! (*Aloud.*) Ahem-aha-a! Excuse me, my dear aunt. (*Looks significantly at FRED.*) A slight mistake on the part of Muggins. This is my chum, Harry Meredith.

MRS. H. (*shocked*). Oh! really he—

HARRY. Don't make any excuses. You will only have to do your greeting over again. (*Embraces her, and then turns towards FANNY.*) And this is—

MRS. H. Why, your cousin, Miss Morrison.

HARRY. Ah! to be sure. Very awkward of me. My dear cousin, I am charmed to meet you. (*Kisses.*) Cousins, you know. (*Aside.*) This isn't a bad snap, after all: much obliged, Mr. Fred. (*Aloud.*) Mr. Meredith, Miss Morrison.

FANNY (*to FRED*). A very bad mistake on aunt's part, was it not? (*Aside.*) How strangely they both act!

FRED (*not yet quite recovered*). Ye-es. My only sorrow, however, is, you know, that—er—the mistake—er—was not discovered later, as it were. I envy my chum.

FANNY. Oh! I am afraid that all men are alike. Only college men are, perhaps, a little more so. (*Sits and talks with FRED.*)

MRS. H. (*sits at desk*). And now, my dear boy, let me come to business. You were so surprised when we came in, that I strongly suspect you've not received my letter.

HARRY. No, I haven't. It will probably come in the next mail. I was surprised, agreeably surprised, at meeting you. It's so very long since I've seen you. (*Aside.*) Good Lord! there's the letter right at her elbow. I must get her away from there.

MRS. H. I know it, Fred, and I reproach myself strongly. But this summer I mean to make amends. I hope you have made no plans for spending your vacation, because I want you for a good long visit. Fanny has consented to spend a month or so with me, and you could have such a nice time!

HARRY (*aside*). Well, I should remark. (*Aloud.*) Thanks. I'm sure I should be delighted. But—er—won't you take this chair (*offering one at some distance from the desk*): it's more comfortable.

MRS. H. No, thanks: this one is very nice.
(*Enter MUGGINS with mail; goes to FRED, who doesn't notice him.*)

MUGGINS. Hyar's some mo' letters, Mahrs Fred. (*No response.*) Letters, Mahrs Fred (*louder*). (*Aside.*) So busy

buzzin' pretty gal, don' hear noffin'. (*Aloud.*) I say, Mahrs Fred (*pulls his coat*).

FRED (*angrily*). Well, what do you want?

MUGGINS. Hyar's some mail.

FRED (*takes letters, and looks at them*). These ain't for me, you rascal: they're for Fred.

MUGGINS. Wha-wha's dat, massa?

FRED (*excitedly*). They're for Fred: Fred Parks, — that man over there. Can't you tell us apart yet?

MUGGINS. Look a-heah, massa —

HARRY. Come here and give me the letters, and clear out.

MUGGINS. But, Mahrs Harry —

HARRY (*going for him*). Come, vamoose, clear out. (*Exit MUGGINS expostulating.*)

FANNY (*aside*). There is some roguery here, and I'll find it out.

MRS. H. How queerly that negro acts! Does he make such mistakes often?

HARRY (*running over letters*). Oh, no! or, rather, yes. You see, we've had him but a short time. (*Aside.*) Gad, though, I've a plan for getting her away from that desk. (*Aloud.*) Excuse me, but, Harry, will you come here a moment?

FRED. Certainly. Will you excuse me, Miss Morrison?

HARRY (*aside, showing him letter*). For heaven's sake, can't you get your aunt away from the table? I've said we received no letter, and there it is right under her nose. Put these in the drawer, can't you, and make her get up? (*Aloud, looking meaningly at FRED.*) A-a-where did you put the other letters? (*Nudges him.*)

FRED (*winking*). In the desk. I'll get them. Excuse me, Mrs. Huntoon. Might I trouble you for a moment? (*Opens drawers, etc., compelling her to move to some distance.*) Ah, here it is! (*Passes something to HARRY.* MRS. H. *returns.*)

HARRY (*aside*). Good Lord! she's gone back again. Let's club her!

MRS. H. (*takes up her letter*). Why, you naughty boy! Isn't this my letter? It looks like my writing. Where can my glasses be? Fanny, won't you see? (*Starts to pass letter to FANNY.*)

FRED (*shouts*). Look out, ladies, there's a mouse!

LADIES (*jumping into chairs*). Where, where? (FRED and HARRY *rush, and manage to sweep papers from desk, and to get the letter which MRS. H., in her fright, has dropped. They beat about for some time.*)

HARRY (*puffing, and fixing collar*). There, I guess he's frightened, if not beaten, to death.

LADIES (*breathlessly*). Has he gone?

FRED (*leading FANNY to seat*). There's no further need of concern. He's done for.

MRS. H. (*returns to table*). And, now that beast is dead, where's that letter? (*Looks over papers.*)

HARRY (*aside tapping breast-pocket*). Where, oh where? (*Aloud.*) It must be in this pile somewhere. Allow me to look them over for you, though I'm sure it can't be there.

FANNY. How I do envy you your trip to Saratoga! and you start to-morrow? What bliss! A friend of mine spent last summer there, and her letters filled me with envy. She had quite a flirtation with Fred, I understand. But of course you know all about that.

FRED (*apprehensively*). Where did she stop?

FANNY. Let me see: I think—it—was, yes, I am quite sure,—Congress Hall.

FRED (*aside, faintly*). Just where I stopped. (*Aloud.*) What was her name? Perhaps I know her.

FANNY. Wainwright. Mollie Wainwright.

FRED (*aside*). I rather guess I do know all about that little flirtation. I shall have to tell Miss Mollie to be more careful what she puts in her letters this summer. (*Aloud.*) Oh, yes, I know her. Rather jolly kind of girl, if I remember rightly.

FANNY. What! were you there too?

FRED. Was—I—there—too! (*Aside.*) Good Lord! I've done it now. (*Aloud.*) Well, not exactly there. You see, I happened there, as it were; boys off on tramp—happened there, you see.

FANNY (*aside*). Yes: I'm afraid I see more than you think I do.

FRED (*nervously*). And—and—er—she's to be there this summer, I believe.

FANNY (*confidentially*). Now I am going to confide a secret to you,—a surprise for Fred. You must not breathe a word of it to him. I've prevailed on her to give up Saratoga, and spend the summer with me.

FRED. The devil!

FANNY (*frigidly*). Sir!

FRED. I—I—beg pardon; really, I—I—(*aside*) what the deuce shall I say? (*Aloud.*) I just thought of—of a letter that I should have posted earlier: that's all. You said she was to spend the summer with you?

FANNY (*aside*). What excuses he makes, and how nervous they both seem! I hope we have not stumbled on any thing. (*Aloud.*) Yes, at least until August.

FRED (*aside*). Gad, I must get out of this! (*Aloud.*) Ah—er. Wouldn't you like to take a stroll through the grounds? You're aunt will excuse you, I'm sure. She probably would like to see Harry—(*aside*) confound it!—(*aloud*) Fred, I mean, alone. Besides, it's very warm in here. (*Rises.*)

FANNY (*rises*). Certainly. I should so enjoy it! (*Aside.*) Poor fellow, he looks warm! (*Aloud.*) Aunt, Mr. Meredith and I are going out to see the sights. (*Exit.*)

MRS. H. There, now they are gone, I can have a nice quiet chat with you. Come and sit right down here beside me, and tell me all about yourself. But before you begin: haven't you some mending I can do? Boys are such terrible creatures on clothes!

HARRY. My dear aunt, my wardrobe is in the most perfect condition. When any thing gives out, I work it off on the Sheenies. So I really don't see as I can indulge you. (*Aside.*) Is this my lot for the summer?

MRS. H. How good of you! And are these Sheenies a very poor family? I suppose you have an ample field for your charity. You are just like your mother, the dear girl, always looking out for the poor.

HARRY (*aside*). Poor family? Charity? What in the world can the old girl mean? Oh, ho, I see! She doesn't twig me. I'll pipe her off a little. (*Aloud.*) Yes, there are lots of needy people about, but I have more to do with this family than any other. They are a large one, in the first place, and are very self-sacrificing. They were originally wealthy merchants, but met with heavy losses, and are now in very reduced circumstances. But, notwithstanding their poverty, they still keep one or two little shops open in the vicinity for the convenience of their old patrons. They will even lend you money on old clothing, or any thing of that kind, if you are temporarily embarrassed, and will return your property whenever desired.

MRS. H. How noble of them! What a pleasure it must be to do for such people!

HARRY. Yes, pleasant, but expensive.

MRS. H. Expensive?

HARRY. Ye-es: one feels called on to do so much, you know. (*Aside.*) Once more I breathe.

MRS. H. Oh, yes, I see! just like your dear mother. And that reminds me: when did you hear from home last, and how were they all? I am positively ashamed of myself. I've been owing your dear mother a letter for almost a year; and here you have been three years in college, and I haven't seen you once. But I should know you anywhere. You are the perfect image of your dear mother. Now tell me all about them.

HARRY (*aside, bracing himself*). Now for it. Every man for himself, etc. (*Aloud.*) The last letter I had didn't have much news. They were all as well as usual.

MRS. H. And how is Lou? The poor child! Your mother was dreadfully anxious about her when she wrote last, — had almost given her up.

HARRY (*aside*). Who the deuce is Lou? Never heard Fred speak about her. Anyway, I should say that Lou had been sick. (*Aloud.*) Oh, Lou! she's pretty well now, but the doctor thinks it will be some time before she entirely recovers.

MRS. H. What! Has she been ill? I haven't heard any thing about it.

HARRY (*aside*). Bull number one. What the dickens shall I say? (*Aloud.*) Yes, she had a kind of slow fever, and was ill for two or three months.

MRS. H. Indeed! I'm so sorry. But what I meant was, Did she marry that man?

HARRY (*aside*). I see it, methinks. A case of undesirable suitor. (*Aloud.*) What man?

MRS. H. Why, Fred! I'm astonished that you should say such a thing about your own sister. A girl as modest and careful as she is! I mean that Mr. Cutter, of course.

HARRY (*aside*). Well, I'm glad to find out the relationship of Lou. (*Aloud.*) Oh, she married him about three months ago.

MRS. H. Lou — married — to — Mr. — Cutter? Why, you quite take my breath away.

HARRY (*aside*). Mine went long ago.

MRS. H. You don't mean to say he gave up that other girl, and took Lou after all?

HARRY. Oh, no! she died a very short time after they were married, and then he came back to Lou.

MRS. H. I shouldn't have thought your mother would have heard of such a thing. Why, it's perfectly scandalous! I don't see how she allowed it; and Lou too! Well, I never!

HARRY. I never did, myself.

MRS. H. When did Mr. Cutter marry Miss What's-her-name?

HARRY (*aside*). Thunder, what a mess I'm in! (*Aloud*). About six months ago, I think.

MRS. H. Well, that's a good deal to happen to a man in six months,—a marriage, death of wife, three months sickness of former flame, and marriage number two.

HARRY (*blankly*). Ye-es. He did rather hurry things. (*Aside*.) Confound her! I'd like to throttle her.

MRS. H. But tell me, how did your dear mother bear the loss of Charley? It must have broken her heart.

HARRY (*aside*). I guess we'll chance it, that Charley is dead. It seems a pretty sure thing. (*Aloud*.) Mother bore it splendidly. We had no idea she would be so reconciled. (*Watches her keenly*.)

MRS. H. I am so glad!

HARRY (*aside*). I guess I'm all right this time, so I'll enlarge a little just for luck. (*Aloud*.) Yes, she's just the same about the house. But she keeps his room just as he left it, and she carries flowers to his grave every day, and cuts the grass with her own hands, and—and—and—Why, what's the matter, Mrs. Huntoon?

MRS. H. (*holding up hands*). Why, when did it happen?

HARRY (*aside*). Crushed again! Have I made another mistake? No, this man is going to be dead if I die in the attempt. (*Aloud*.) It—it happened but a short time ago. He was drowned.

MRS. H. That's just what I knew would happen. She never should have allowed him to enter the navy. There is so much danger, and then it's so demoralizing! Though I'm sure Charley would never have done any thing wrong. You were both so like your dear mother! But how did it happen?

HARRY. It was off Madagascar—

MRS. H. Why, when was he ordered away? I thought he was to stay at Key West for three years.

HARRY (*recklessly*). Oh, that was all changed. As I said, it was off Madagascar, and some accident happened: now, what was it? Oh! the main-brace, some rope, broke; it had to be mended, or the ship would go to the bottom. The captain called for volunteers.

MRS. H. And Charley volunteered. How like his dear mother, to — to — what is it they call it when they mend a rope? Ah, yes! I remember now. I have quite a deal of knowledge about vessels: my step-sister's brother was a sea-captain. Let's see: oh, yes! splice is the word. And so Charley fell overboard while trying to splice the main-brace, and none of the others dared do it, you say?

HARRY. No, not one. For, you see, it's a very difficult thing to do. Every thing seems unsettled, and it's sometimes very difficult to know when you have spliced sufficiently: sometimes the motion of the vessel makes it seem as though the deck was rising right up in your face, and you are unable to stand up, and — and —

MRS. H. What a graphic description! I trust you have not been risking your life?

HARRY (*aside*). Good Lord! I wish Fred was here. This is rich. (*Aloud*.) Me? oh, no! Charley wrote me all about it. He's —

MRS. H. Wrote you all about it: why, how could that be?

HARRY (*aside*). What a confounded idiot I am, anyway! I wish Fred would hurry up, and take care of his own relations. (*Aloud*.) Why — yes — you see, he's done the same thing before: he was probably a little careless. (*Aside*.) I can't manufacture lies much longer. Somehow I must put a stop to this. Heavens! Here she goes again.

MRS. H. When did you hear from — (*Enter MUGGINS*.)

HARRY (*aside*). A break at last.

MUGGINS. Massa Parks wants ter know what train de missus wants ter take.

MRS. H. Mr. Parks?

HARRY. Look here, Muggins, I want you once for all to understand that my name is Parks: I should think you had been here long enough to know that.

MUGGINS (*puzzled*). Ya-as, Massa Ha — Fred.

HARRY. And when you come into a room don't act as

though you had a current of electricity running through you.

MUGGINS. Ya-as, Massa Ha — Fred. (*Aside.*) Golly, I mos' done did it dat time, sho'.

MRS. H. (*hastily looking at watch*). Mercy, Fred! What a time we've been here! — Tell (*to* MUGGINS) Mr. Meredith and Miss Morrison to return at once. (*Exit* MUGGINS.) What time does the next train start? I've barely time to catch the last train home.

HARRY. There is no need of hurrying. You've ample time before the next train starts. If you really think you must go? (*Aside.*) Heaven help us if she don't!

MRS. H. Oh, yes! We must go immediately. I do hope I've not detained you from your work, Fred.

HARRY (*relieved*). The ladies can never interfere with my work.

MRS. H. You flatterer! But (*anxiously*) where can those children be? Ah! here they come. (*Enter* FRED and FANNY.)

FRED. Back safe and sound. I hope you haven't worried about us.

FANNY. And just see the specimens that the man in the museum gave me. Wasn't it nice of him?

HARRY. You don't mean to say that old —

MRS. H. (*interrupting*). Excuse me, Fred, but we've not a minute to lose. Fanny, won't you help me on with my things? Yes, put my shawl over so; and, Fanny, do you remember — no, put my bonnet on first — do you remember Charley? — do hurry, my dear. Now my gloves.

FANNY. Do you mean my cousin Charley Meredith?

MRS. H. Yes. Well, he's — now my parasol — he's dead, drowned.

FRED (*excitedly*). What!

HARRY (*aside*). Ssh, old man. Look out what you say.

FRED. Yes, I know. But Charley dead?

MRS. H. Did you know him? I didn't know he'd ever been North. — My rubbers, Fanny.

HARRY (*aside*). Confound it! shut up. It's a bull of mine. (*Aloud.*) No, it isn't the Meredith you know: it's my brother we are talking about.

FRED (*catching on*). Ah! pray excuse me. — Allow me to assist you with those rubbers, Miss Morrison.

FANNY (*rises*). If you would be so kind.

MRS. H. I declare, you are better than Fanny. (*Rises, and stamps rubbers on.*) My dear, is my dress all right? Come, we must hurry!—When may we expect you, Fred? to-morrow?

HARRY. Well, I don't know: I hardly think I can come down for a few days yet. I have several little matters of business to attend to. (*Aside.*) Get my duds from my friends the Sheenies, for one thing. (*Aloud.*) I'll write as soon as I can arrange things.

MRS. H. Well, come as soon as you can, that's all. — Fanny, my parasol. There, now all ready? — Good-by.

FANNY. Just a moment, aunt. (*Whispers.*)

MRS. H. Why, of course. Fred knows we shall be more than glad to have him bring any of his friends with him.

FANNY (*saucily to FRED*). That is meant particularly for you, Mr. Meredith.

FRED. Ah! thanks, I'm sure. I'm sorely tempted.

FANNY. Pshaw! You know you wouldn't give up your trip to Saratoga under any consideration. Well, good-by. (*Chorus good-bys. Exeunt MRS. H. and FANNY. HARRY and FRED, as soon as door is closed, sink exhausted into chairs.*)

HARRY (*beginning to laugh*). Fred, my boy, I've raised the old Harry himself with your relations; ha, ha, ha! I want to see your next letter from home. It'll be a paralyzer, I'll warrant.

FRED (*anxiously*). You don't think she suspected any thing, do you?

HARRY. She? no. Nary suspect. But, mark me, that little girl did. But come, let's light up, and let me tell you how I fooled the old tabby; ha, ha, ha! (*They light cigarettes.*)

FRED. Well, I can tell you it's no laughing matter for me. I'm in a regular funk.

HARRY (*sobering*). No; what is it?

FRED. Why, the whole thing is wrong.

HARRY. Now, just a moment, before you go any further: don't propose giving up the scheme, because I've put my pile in, and want to see it through. The fair Fanny taketh my eye. Yea, verily, she seemeth a toothsome maid.

FRED. Well, but see here.

HARRY. Avaunt, tempter! I'll not see here. You proposed the job, and I went in nilly willy. As you sow, so shall ye reap. So, so!

FRED. But confound the luck, man! Mollie Wainwright is not going to Saratoga at all, but is going to Duxbury to visit at my aunt's. Now, where am I going to be all summer?

HARRY. Ho, ho! ha, ha, ho! What's that — ha, ha — you say? Mollie, dear Mollie, going to Duxbury, ha, ha! Oh, it's too good to be true! and you — ha, ha, ah-h-h — you gay Lothario are left, decidedly; ha, ha, he, ho, whoop!

FRED (*vexed*). Funny, isn't it?

HARRY. Funny? no name for it.

FRED. Well, see here. It isn't going to be such plain sailing for you. You don't know Mollie Wainwright from the man in the moon. What are you going to say to her?

HARRY (*blankly*). Blame the luck! that's so. What are we to do? It's no use talking about giving up the plan. For it would be all up with you and your grandmother, or aunt, or whatever she is: that's evident. By Jove, I have it! didn't you wear a full beard last summer?

FRED. Yes, but I don't see —

HARRY. No matter. You will in a minute. I'll shave, that will account for the change in the man she expects to meet. Give me some points, and the thing is done.

FRED. Nice plan, very. Its excellence is only equalled by its selfishness. Where am I coming in? It's all very nice for you; but I object, decidedly.

HARRY. It is bad for you, old man. But what can we do? Ha! I have it again. I'll confess to Mollie, — throw myself on her mercy, tell how she was the cause of it all, and make it all right with her. And then you know that invitation: you can come down and make a visit too. By George! (*Slapping him on the back.*) It's all right: don't you see? Once get Miss Mollie on our side, and we can carry the thing through, and nobody the wiser. And then I told her I couldn't come down for a few days. We can go down to the Vineyard with the boys for a week: then one morning I'll go down, and you can appear, ostensibly from Saratoga, in the afternoon.

FRED. A born diplomat. Let me look at you. (*Turns him about.*) An enormous head!

HARRY. And packed full, would be more complimentary. (*Looks at watch.*) Gad, it's time we met round the festive board. What do you say to a supper in town? we'll get Otis, Teddy, and the rest of the gang, hey?

FRED. Done; and we can stay in town all night, and leave for the Vineyard early to-morrow. I'll call Muggins. He can stay, and pack up our duds whenever we are ready to go to Duxbury, and we needn't come out here at all again.

HARRY. 'Tis well, my lord. Speed away.

FRED (*goes to door*). What, ho! without there! Muggins, I would a word with thee.

(*Enter MUGGINS.*)

MUGGINS. Ya-as, Massa Fred, I'se hyar.

FRED (*severely*). Now, Muggins, attention. Harry, stand beside me. We are to go to Duxbury this summer. You are to go with us.

MUGGINS. Ya-as, massa.

FRED. And for this summer *he* is *Fred*, and *I* am *Harry*. He is me, and I am he. Can you surround that?

MUGGINS. You is him, and him is you?

HARRY. Yes, that's it. Now stick to it.

MUGGINS. And who de debbil am I?

FRED. Why, you are much the same as you've always been.

MUGGINS. All right; I'se do dat, sho'.

HARRY. And now, Muggins, one week from to-morrow, pack our trunks, changing them, giving me Fred's, and Fred's mine, and meet us at the station at nine A.M. (*Turning to FRED.*) Then he and I'll go down, and you can come later. I'll explain it somehow, so it'll be all right. — Now, Muggins, you understand?

MUGGINS. Yes, massa.

HARRY. All ready, Fred?

FRED. Yes. (*They lock arms.*)

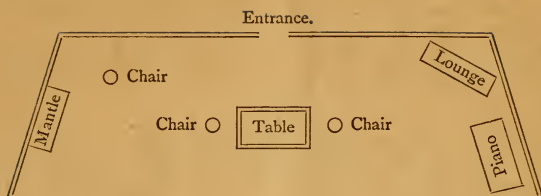
MUGGINS. But I say, does yer want —

HARRY. Do just as you were told, Muggins. Come along, old man.

MUGGINS. But I don't —

(*FRED and HARRY begin singing "We're dreaming now of Duxbury, sweet Duxbury," — air, "Listen to the Mocking-Bird," — and exit, while MUGGINS expostulates in vain for further directions.*)

(CURTAIN.)



ACT II.

Sitting-room. MRS. HUNTOON, FANNIE, and MOLLIE *lolling about.*

MRS. H. (*at table; throws down book.*) Well, children, Fred will be here in a few minutes now. I am not sorry his friend Mr. Meredith has been persuaded to come with him. It will be so much pleasanter for you.

MOLLIE. Thanks: of course. But you needn't have worried on our account. We hardly need boys to amuse us.

FANNY. No, indeed! (*Goes to mirror, and arranges hair.*) But, then, it will be a little better. One apiece, you know. (*Laughs, and nods at MOLLIE.* *Enter KATE.*)

KATE. The gentleman has arriv', mum. (*Girls hastily compose themselves.*)

MRS. H. Bring him right up here. (*Exit KATE.*) We must take him to our hearts at once. (*Girls laugh.* *Enter HARRY, MUGGINS, and KATE.*)

HARRY (*throws duster, etc., to MUGGINS.*) My dear aunt!

MRS. H. My dear nephew! (*Kisses him.*) Welcome!

HARRY. Ah, Miss Fanny! once more we meet. (*Kisses her.*)

FANNY. There, sir; that will do. Now look straight at me. Prepare to be surprised.

HARRY (*aside*). Nary surprise for me.

FANNY. Prepare to meet your doom. (*Turns him toward MOLLIE, who on his entrance goes to rear.*)

HARRY. What! How is this? Miss Wainwright here? (*Takes both her hands.*) This is indeed a surprise. I thought you were in Saratoga. I'm overjoyed at meeting my doom.

MOLLIE (*laughing*). You may thank your lucky stars that your doom met you here. I never should have recognized you anywhere else.

HARRY. It's probably the absence of my beard. I shaved this summer. We'll only have to get acquainted all over again.

MRS. H. Now, would you like to go to your room?

HARRY. Yes, thanks. It's rather a dusty ride down here. (*Mrs. H. rings. Enter KATE.*)

MRS. H. Show Mr. Parks his room, Katy, and tell John to carry his trunk up at once. Muggins will help him if necessary. (*Exeunt KATE, MUGGINS, and HARRY. HARRY throws kiss to girls.*)

MRS. H (*looking after him*). Isn't he a dear boy, though! So like his mother!

MOLLIE. Awfully dear. Do you think your command to take him to our hearts was sufficiently carried out? I was in mortal terror when he made that plunge at me, for fear he intended to include me in the family. But how he's changed! I never saw any thing like it.

FANNY. I hardly have, myself. A beard makes him look a good deal differently.

MRS. H. Now, children (*rises*), I'm going to run down stairs, and get him a lunch. He'll need something after his ride. If he comes down before I return, you entertain him. (*Exit.*)

FANNY (*looking significantly at MOLLIE*). I think I'll go and help aunt. You can entertain him, I imagine. (*Exit, MOLLIE expostulating.*)

MOLLIE (*goes to mantle, and finds an old picture of FRED*). Well, Fred Parks, for once the adage of the leopard and his spots is wrong; for I never saw a man change so completely. His ways, his voice, and his looks are all different. Though (*laughs*) perhaps I've got him mixed up with some one else. Anyway, *le roi est mort, vive le roi*. (*Clatter outside. MOLLIE retreats to rear of stage. Enter MUGGINS followed by HARRY.*)

MUGGINS (*falls to knees*). Please, massa, I done did jes' as yer tole me.

HARRY (*looking hastily, does not see MOLLIE*). You great

blockhead, shut up! and don't make such an infernal racket.

MUGGINS. Didn't you tell me you was him, and him was you, and to change de trunks an' ebery ting?

HARRY (*angrily*). Yes, but I thought any fool would know better than to exchange the clothes. It's a mighty lucky thing that Fred's coming to-day: his shirts (*pulling at neck*) are about fourteen sizes too small. Come, clear out, and finish unpacking that trunk. (*Exit MUGGINS.*) Gad! suppose Fred wasn't coming for a — (*Catches sight of MOLLIE, who has thrown herself into a chair, and, when seen, bursts out laughing. Aside.*) Great Scot! the cat's out of the bag, sure! Can I say any thing?

MOLLIE (*sarcastically*). How the loss of a beard does change one! Yes, I really think we shall have to get acquainted all over again. (*Rises.*)

HARRY. Miss Wainwright, allow me to explain — Fred —

MOLLIE. Excuse me (*crosses*): wouldn't it be better to explain *yourself*?

HARRY. Beg pardon! I am Harry Meredith, — Fred's chum, — at your service. Fred thought you were to be at Saratoga this summer, and had his plans all made to go there, when his aunt invited him here. He proposed that I should come in his stead. Before we had decided any thing, his aunt appeared. I acted upon his suggestion, and it was only after it was too late that Fred learned you were to be here. We could not go back: fortunately, Mrs. Huntoon had invited me to bring any of my friends. Taking advantage of this, Fred is coming to-day, relying on me to explain all to you. So you see the affair with Muggins only hastened matters a little.

MOLLIE. And so you two fellows have changed places?

HARRY. Exactly! and now you won't give the thing away, will you?

MOLLIE. I'll see.

HARRY (*aside*). See! Great Cæsar! if she does tell them, what in the dickens shall I do? Here I've been kissing the old lady and her niece, and the Lord knows what not! I'm a fool for ever having gone into the thing!

(*Enter MRS. H. with tray. MOLLIE clears table, and sits.*)

MRS. H. Ah, my dear, down so soon? Has Mollie been taking good care of you? I thought I'd bring you up a little lunch, after your journey.

HARRY. Thanks: you are very kind, but you shouldn't take the trouble. (*Sits and eats ravenously, eyeing MOLLIE nervously, who is laughing at him.*)

MRS. H. Why, Mollie, what pleases you so?

MOLLIE. I was only thinking of a story that I read last night. Let me assist you in helping Mr. Parks: he seems very hungry. (*Rises, and sits opposite HARRY.*)

HARRY (*aside*). Confound the girl! but she makes a mistake, when she tries bluff at the table. (*Helps himself deliberately to every thing passed him.*)

MRS. H. This carries me back to my school days: it did seem as though I never could eat enough, vacations. School tables are such meagre things!

MOLLIE. Did you say, Mr. Parks, they were very poor, where you are?

HARRY. Do you mean poor as regards food or manners?

MOLLIE. Both.

MRS. H. What time does Mr. Meredith arrive?

HARRY (*pushing away from the table*). About half-past one.

MRS. H. Then I will order dinner at two; but won't you have something more?

HARRY. No, thanks: really, I couldn't.

MOLLIE. I hope I haven't taken away your appetite.

HARRY. That would be impossible.

MOLLIE (*significantly*). Would it, indeed! I wonder if —
MRS. H. Well, if I cannot persuade you, I will have Katy remove the lunch. (*Rings. Enter KATE.*)

MRS. H. Dinner at two, and you may take away the tray.

KATE. Yes, mum. (*Exit with tray.*)

MRS. H. (*sits*). I see you still have Muggins. Does he make as bad mistakes as ever? You see (*turning to MOLLIE*), we called on Fred at his room. I hadn't seen him for so long, that I didn't know him; and Muggins gave our cards to Fred's chum by mistake. It was very awkward for a moment. (*Enter FANNY.*)

FANNY (*leaning on back of Mrs. H.'s chair*). Awkward! Well, I should remark. You came very near losing your cousinly greeting (*to HARRY*) by it, that's all.

MOLLIE (*as she speaks, HARRY starts*). I shouldn't think you would keep such a stupid fellow, Mr. Parks: one such occurrence ought to be enough. And then, consider the loss you came near sustaining.

HARRY (*aside*). Gad! I thought she was going for me that time, sure. (*Aloud.*) It would be, but fortunately such *contretemps* are almost unheard of in the lives of us Benedicts.

FANNY. Us Benedicts, indeed! Mollie's letters of last summer rather refute your right to that title. My! that makes me think. The postman came while I was down stairs. Here's the mail, auntie. (*Hands letters.*)

MRS. H. (*running them over*). Ah! Here is a letter from home, Fred. I wrote just as soon as I got here. Excuse me all if I read it. (*Looks for glasses.*) Where are my glasses? I had them but a moment ago.

HARRY (*aside*). A letter! Dished by the great horn spoon.

MOLLIE (*eying him*). Oh, now we shall hear all about that terrible accident to your brother.

HARRY. Let me read it for you, aunt, if you can't find your glasses. (*FANNY and MOLLIE join in search.*)

FANNY. I don't see them anywhere.

HARRY (*nervously*). Never mind. Don't look any longer. I'll read the letter. (*Takes it. Aside.*) Confound those girls! why don't they stop?

MOLLIE. They must be found some time: now is as good as any. Victory! (*Holds them up.*) Now, Mr. Parks, we don't need your assistance.

HARRY (*returns letter, and coolly leans on mantle*). Now keep a stiff upper lip, old man: it's coming.

MRS. H. (*reading*). Why, she doesn't say thing about what I wrote. What can it mean? Oh, here it is! "Fred must have been giving you some of his nonsense. Lou is at home here, and has been nicely; and Charley is still at Key West." (*Rises, lets letters fall.*) Well, sir, I am ashamed of you, — ashamed of you, sir. The idea, the idea of playing such a joke, such a stupid joke on me, sir! It's preposterous, it's preposterous. No, sir, not one word. (*Exit.*)

FANNY (*laughing*). O Fred, what made you do it? Aunt positively hates all such things. But it was too good, anyway. (*Rises.*) I'll take her letters to her, and try to appease her. She'll get over it in a little while, I guess. (*Exit.*)

HARRY (*walking to and fro, aside*). What a fool I was not to think of her writing, and getting an answer! A pretty mess I'm making of it.

MOLLIE. How is your appetite now?

HARRY (*aside*). I thirst for a certain damsel's gore. (*Aloud.*) Come, why didn't you let me read the letter? Then I could have made it all right.

MOLLIE (*laughing*). Really Mr. Meredith, I didn't think of there being any thing of the nature of an *exposé* in the letter; but I hardly think it would have made much difference if I had. It was nothing more than due recompense.

HARRY (*aside*). Come to think of it, it isn't so bad, after all. The old lady is in a tiff because I fooled her. By Jove! Ye feline still remains in ye bag. (*Aloud.*) I have taken a little mental tonic, Miss Wainwright, and will tell you that my appetite is unshaken. I feel no concern for yours, laughter is such an excellent stimulus. But come, let us bury the hatchet. They evidently expect you to entertain me. Do not disappoint them. There is some time yet before Fred will arrive: shall we meantime look through the grounds?

MOLLIE (*quizzically*). Can I trust myself with such a deceiver?

HARRY. What has your experience taught you?

MOLLIE. Now, Mr. Meredith, don't ask me to be uncomplimentary. But, yes (*rises*), we'll bury the hatchet. But mind you don't try any more pranks. I declare, I don't know but what the deception began last summer, and that you are really Mr. Parks. My only sorrow would be that the delusion had not lasted longer.

HARRY. Thanks. Believe me the most innocent of mortals. (*Exit both. Enter KATE.*)

KATE (*fixes fire*). Och, that dahncin naygar! Shure, I wonder will he sthop the summer here? Ah's me if he does! (*Enter MUGGINS. KATE, aside.*) Arrah, thin, there comes the spalpeen. Up to some divilment, I'll warrant. Perhaps I don't see you, you haythen. (*Sings.*)

MUGGINS (*aside*). Golly now, jus' wait: I has a scheme, I has. (*Takes pin out of coat, and feels point.*) Guess dat's sharp 'nuff. (*Steals up behind KATE, and holds it close to her cheek. Aloud.*) I say, Missus Kate?

KATE (*turns head*). Well, you black — oh, oh! my cheek! (*Fumps up.*) Shure, I'm dead kilt intirely. Oh, oh! the murderin' haythen! (*Runs after him.*) Jist let me lay my two hands on yer black carkiss for wan minit. (*MUGGINS exits, deftly avoiding MRS. H., who enters. KATE runs into her.*)

MRS. H. (*standing in doorway*). Why, why! what does this mean, Katy?

KATE. Shure, mum, I was only —

MRS. H. There, there, girl, don't make any excuses. What do you mean by such conduct?

KATE. Shure, mum, I was only chasin' that black naygar.

MRS. H. What black negro? I see none about here.

KATE. Indade, thin, he was here a minit ago. (*Rubs check.*) Shure, he rin past ye when ye came in.

MRS. H. (*entering the room*). Run past me when I came in, nonsense! I am not quite blind yet. Katy, you have been drinking again. What did I tell you?

KATE (*falls to knees, crying*). By all the saints, I haven't touched a drap since I promised ye. Oh, woes is me! Shure, you belave me, don't ye? An' me a poor workin' girl! Oh, ho! Shure, I only kim in here to fix the bit fire, whin that haythen, God bless him! no, I don't mean that. He kim in, and sthuck a pin way in my cheek, and not a drop have I tasted.

MRS. H. Well, well! get up, and don't make such a noise. We shall have the police in here before we know it. (*Sits at table.*)

KATE. An' ye won't discharge me, and me a poor workin' girl. Shure, I haven't bin wid ye long enough to ask for a character.

MRS. H. Discharge you? No: don't be such a fool. (*Exit KATE.*) It does seem as though every thing went wrong to-day. The idea of that scamp of a nephew of mine playing such a trick on me! (*Calls.*) Fanny, Fanny! where is that girl? Fanny!

FANNY (*outside*). Yes, auntie: just a moment. (*Enters.*) What is it?

MRS. H. (*crossly*). Will you get my watch? It's almost time for my estimable nephew's friend to arrive.

FANNY (*putting arm about her neck*). Oh, come now! Don't judge him too harshly. You know college boys are full of such pranks. I'm sure he is sorry.

MRS. H. I shall believe that when *he* says so. (*Bell rings.*)

BOTH. There he is.

MRS. H. And Fred not here! Where is he? (*Enter FRED and MUGGINS.*)

MRS. H. Welcome, Mr. Meredith! I'm very glad to see you.

FRED. Thanks.

FANNY. Really, I hardly believed you would forego the pleasure of Saratoga.

FRED. Now, *you* ought not to say that.

MRS. H. Muggins, take Mr. Meredith's bag to his room. (*Exit* MUGGINS.) Have you had a pleasant visit, Mr. Meredith?

FRED (*all sit*). Yes, quite. But my starting for Duxbury was the best part of it.

FANNY. Flattery so soon! What shall we come to?

FRED. But where is Fred? I half expected him at the station.

FANNY. Now you don't mean that. Remember, Miss Wainwright is here.

FRED (*uneasily*). Is — is he as attentive as ever?

MRS. H. Attentive? They are together all the time.

FANNY. Your face is so long: one would think you were smitten yourself. But it can't have progressed so very far, for Fred only arrived this morning. (*HARRY heard laughing outside.*)

MRS. H. (*rises*). Ah! there he is. (*All rise.*)

FRED (*aside*). Now, keep your wits about you, old boy. Heavens! supposing Harry hasn't had a chance to make it all right with her! (*Enter HARRY and MOLLIE.*)

HARRY. 'Tis he! 'tis he! (*Throws his arm about his neck.*)

FRED (*anxiously, aside*). Is it all right?

HARRY (*aside*). Ssh — yes. (*Aloud.*) Glad to see you, old fellow. So you concluded to give the city of spring waters the go-by. Right glad of it! Allow me to present my chum, Mr. Meredith, to Miss Wainwright.

FRED (*bowing nervously*). Ah — yes — really charmed. I feel I almost know Miss Wainwright. I've heard her spoken of often. Yes — you know — (*They sit and talk.*)

HARRY. Now, my dear aunt, do give me a chance to explain.

MOLLIE (*aside*). How well he does it! It would be a shame to expose them.

HARRY. Won't you forgive that stupid joke of mine? I don't know what put it into my head.

FANNY. Yes, auntie, do.

MRS. H. (*sits, severely*). What made you say such a thing? What object could you have had? Your dear mother must have been surprised, to say the least.

HARRY. I hardly know, myself. But after one begins those things he has to put them through.

FANNY. You didn't deceive me one bit. I knew that there was something up.

HARRY (*aside*). Didn't I, though?

MRS. H. Well, I'll forgive you this time. But don't ever do such a thing again. Now, I suppose you boys would like to talk over things alone; so we will leave you. Come, children. (*Rises.*)

MOLLIE (*rising*). Certainly; and allow them to smoke, and talk us over. Spare us if possible, won't you?

HARRY. You know we sha'n't be able to say any thing uncomplimentary.

MOLLIE. Thanks.

FRED (*aside*). Gad, I don't know about that!

MRS. H. Now, make yourselves perfectly at home. Smoke as much as you please, and ring if you get tired of your own society, or want for any thing. (*Exeunt ladies.*)

FRED (*angrily*). Well, you have made a pretty mess, and feathered your nest nicely. Haven't you? (HARRY, *astonished, makes no reply*). Here Mollie ignores me completely. I began talking about our good times last summer, and all she said was (*mimics*), "Oh, did Mr. Parks tell you about that? It was too jolly for any thing;" and then proceeded to give me details. As though I didn't know it all! (*Pauses. HARRY begins to whistle.*) I say, it's coming down rather hard on a fellow. (*Walks up and down.*) Gad, I don't believe you have told her at all! It's a blamed low trick!

HARRY (*sharply*). Fred!

FRED. Well, of course, I don't mean that I've no doubt you told her every thing.

HARRY. Well, then I wouldn't say I had.

FRED (*walking to and fro*). I shouldn't; and beg your pardon, old boy! But, see here: isn't it hard? she can't seem to get the idea of our exchange through her head.

HARRY. Well, I hardly think I should lose much sleep over such a girl as that. I'll be hanged if I do!

FRED. Yes, you would too, if you felt as I do.

HARRY (*going in front of him*). Parks, you don't mean to say that you care for that girl?

FRED. I do care for Miss Wainwright.

HARRY. And would marry her?

FRED. And would marry her.

HARRY. Propose, then.

FRED. But how the deuce can I? She can't be made to realize who I am.

HARRY. That is rather bad; but then she knows the facts, and must be just humbugging you. (*Sits.*)

FRED. You don't care for her yourself, do you?

HARRY. Great heavens, man, you must be crazy! I care any thing for her? Not by a large, a very large, majority! Is that what has been gnawing at your vitals? Don't let it worry you for an instant. Nonsense, man! But I'll tell you how we can manage it all. I'll write a note, asking Miss Fanny out to ride. You write, and propose to Mollie; and while I am away you can have the thing out: hey?

FRED (*shakes hand*). Done, by Jove! Where's the where-withal for our nefarious scheme?

HARRY. Here's the stuff in this drawer. (*Produces pens, etc.*) Now sit down over there, and we will indite our several epistles. (*Both sit. HARRY dashes off note. Reads.*) "My dear Miss Fanny, may I have the pleasure of a ride on the beach this aft?" That's all right. (*Seals and directs.*) Now, as usual, I suppose you want some help on your effort, young one.

FRED (*rumpling hair*). Blame it all! It's bad enough to propose face to face. But this writing,—oh! it makes me tired. (*Throws down pen.*) I can't do it.

HARRY. Pshaw! Yes, you can too. Take up your pen, and I will dictate. (*FRED does so.*) "My own sweet one."

FRED. Oh, blow that! Give us something decent, or shut up.

HARRY (*aside*). It was always thus. (*Aloud.*) Well, how does "My respected maiden" strike you? (*FRED leaves table.*) Hold on! come once more for the boys. I'll brace up.

FRED (*returns*). All right, go ahead then.

HARRY. "My dear Miss Wainwright." (*Pauses.*)

FRED. Well, go on. I've got that down.

HARRY. "It is needless almost for me to say that I love you,—madly, passionately, love you!" (*Tragically.*)

FRED. Isn't that rather crowding the mourners?

HARRY. Well, if the style is too rich for your blood —

FRED. No, no. Go on. That's all right.

HARRY. Well, let's see, where was I? Oh, yes! "Madly, passionately. Would that my pen could adequately frame sentences indicative of the aforesaid love!"

FRED (*tears up note*). Come, you can't be such a fool as to think she'll take any stock in such taffy as that! Don't make a clown of yourself.

HARRY (*aside*). Poor thing! (*Aloud*.) Well, then, no more fooling. Just write a plain straightforward statement. You can say, "My dear Miss So-and-So, it will be no surprise to you, to learn that I love you." (*Aside*.) That sounds kind of sickish. (*Aloud*.) Then you can ask if it's returned, and all that sort of thing, you know. (*Rises*.) Hang it! I can tell you, this cold-blooded proposing is N. G.

FRED (*sits and writes slowly*). There! I guess that'll do.

HARRY. Fire it off, old man! Let's see if it has any tunes in it.

FRED (*laughing sheepishly*). No, I'd rather not. Let me send it off before I get sick of it. (*HARRY calls. Enter MUGGINS.*)

MUGGINS. Did yer call me, sah?

HARRY. Yes. Take these notes to the young ladies, and bring back the answers; and be quick too.

MUGGINS. Ya-as, massa. (*Aside*.) Dey is a-plottin' already: my eye, won't dere be a right smart row! (*Exits.*)

HARRY (*slaps FRED on back*). Now, brace up, old man! The die is cast. We have crossed the Rubicon. The worst that can happen isn't so very bad. Blow a cloud? (*Sits. Offers cigarette. Both smoke.*) This is the thing to drive away dull care. (*Pause.*)

FRED. Suppose she shouldn't?

HARRY. Suppose who? Shouldn't what?

FRED. Why, suppose she shouldn't accept me.

HARRY. What! thinking of that still? Oh, go for some other girl.

FRED (*rises*). Meredith, you haven't one particle of feeling.

HARRY. Pinch me and see. But what's the use in getting into such a huff? That's what you have done no end of times.

FRED. But I never was so hard hit as this.

HARRY (*rising*). Do you really mean that you are in for it?

FRED. As deep as I know how.

HARRY. Then I'll have to come the great Heaven-bless-you act sooner, by a good deal, than I expected. Just think of it! Fred Parks, the great unterrified, in love. Wonders will never cease. Let me congratulate you.

FRED (*faintly*). Isn't it rather previous?

HARRY. But see here. Something bothers me. We can't get along without giving every thing away to your aunt, some time or other. Now, I understand from Miss Fannie, that she is quite taken with Mollie. If you come out all right, why wouldn't it be a scheme to tell the truth and shame the Devil?

FRED. Perhaps it would. (*Sits.*) But wait until my present trials are over, before you propose any thing new. My brain seethes now.

HARRY. Poor thing! Let her seethe. 'Twill do it good to have a stirring-up once in a while.

FRED. Where can Muggins be? (*Goes to door.*) He ought to be back by this time.

HARRY. You can't expect a young lady to make a decision, which may affect her whole life, in one short half-hour.

FRED. Here he comes. (*Sits. Enter MUGGINS.*)

HARRY. Well, have you the answers?

MUGGINS. Ya-as, massa. (*Hands note to each.*)

FRED (*nervously*). All right: clear out!

MUGGINS. Ya-as, massa. (*Aside.*) Needn't be so peart 'bout it, dough. (*Exit.*)

HARRY (*laughing*). Go it, young one, and have it over with. (*FRED hesitates, opens note, and reads.*)

HARRY (*reading*). "No." (*Aside.*) Well, that's cool! Short and sweet is my lady's motto. She wouldn't be so infernally stuck up if she knew why I asked her.

FRED (*slaps him on back*). Wake up! Now you may congratulate me. Lo! the gods are propitious. Just listen. (*Reads.*) "Certainly, with pleasure: will be down directly. Tell Mrs. Huntoon." How is that for high? Why don't you enthuse?

HARRY. Ah-er, yes, of course I do; both congratulate you and enthuse. Nice girl, etc., etc., *ad infinitum*. (*Aside.*) My head against a pumpkin, that the blamed darky has mixed the notes all the same.

FRED (*excitedly*). Well, how about your ride? Are you going before long?

HARRY (*laughs*). Don't worry, I'll give you all the chance in the world. Miss Fanny does not feel disposed for a ride. But I'll take myself out of the way: I'll smoke in the garden, Maud. (*Exit, returns, dumb show that MOLLIE is coming, exit. Enter MOLLIE.*)

MOLLIE (*aside*). I guess Master Parks is getting enough of his deception: I hated to write as I did, but he'll propose again fast enough. (*Sits at piano. FRED steals up and embraces her.*)

FRED. My own darling!

MOLLIE (*breaking away*). Sir! What does this mean?

FRED. What — does — this — mean? Oh, come, don't plague me any more. (*Offers to embrace her.*)

MOLLIE. Sir!

FRED. Oh, say! That's too bad on a fellow when you have just accepted him.

MOLLIE. Accepted him, indeed! Pray, young sir, do they teach reading at the school you attend? (*Sits on piano-stool.*)

FRED. Yes, and ethics too. Perhaps I had better translate that last for you. It's the science of morals. As for the reading, will you have the kindness to peruse that for me? (*Hands note*)

MOLLIE (*coolly, and returning it*). I never wrote that.

FRED. What! why, it was handed to me not five minutes ago.

MOLLIE. Well? (*Plays a few chords.*)

FRED. Well? Is that all you have to say? Didn't you receive a proposal from me?

(*Enter FANNY.*)

FRED. Confound that girl! What is she here for?

FANNY (*aside*). I guess I've interrupted something. What shall I do? (*Aloud.*) Oh! there's Fred now. By-by. (*Exit.*)

MOLLIE. What made you look so excited, Mr. Parks? You were saying something about a proposal as you were interrupted.

FRED (*aside*). Guess we'll try another tack. (*Aloud.*) You are right: I was speaking. (*Leans nonchalantly against table.*)

MOLLIE (*after waiting some time, aside*). I'm afraid I've

gone too far. (*Coughs, rustles music: FRED pays no attention. Rises as if to leave the room, turns and comes to FRED'S side.*)

MOLLIE. Fred!

FRED. Well?

MOLLIE. I did receive a proposal.

FRED. I'm very glad. Ah-er, may I congratulate you?

MOLLIE. Yes.

FRED. Darling! (*Embraces her.*) Muggins must have changed the notes. I'll thrash the rascal within an inch of his life when I catch him.

MOLLIE. No, let him go. It's all right now.

(*Enter MUGGINS.*)

MUGGINS (*coughs*). I'm not lookin', massa. (*Both start.*) But Massa Fred wants ter know, ken he come in? He says as it's cold outhen dar.

FRED (*laughing*). Tell him and everybody else to come right in. (*Exit MUGGINS.*) I sent him off, Mollie, so as to meet you alone.

(*Enter HARRY.*)

HARRY (*aside*). I was right! (*Aloud.*) Children, kneel at my feet. (*They do.*) Heaven bless you! (*Wipes his eyes. Enter MRS. H.*)

MRS. H. Why! what does this mean?

HARRY. It means that these two young people have taken each other for better or for worse.

MRS. H. (*sits and fans herself*). Well, this beats me! In my time, courting was a matter of months rather than hours. And, beside, I thought you were the favored one. (*Sits at table.*)

HARRY (*crosses*). Let me explain things a little.

FRED. No, let me. I'm the one to do it. It was more my fault. (*Enter FANNY.*)

FANNY. Oh! is it all right? (*Kisses MOLLIE.*)

(*Enter MUGGINS, chased by KATE.*)

KATIE. Mrs. Huntoon, I gives ye my week's warnin'. I'll not sthay in the house wan more minit wid that black ijet. Ah, ye spalpeen! (*Runs at him.*)

MUGGINS (*dodges behind HARRY*). Oh, please, massa, don' let her cotch me!

MRS. H. Tut, tut! What's all this to-do about? A week's warning? What do you mean?

HARRY. Muggins, you rascal, what have you been

doing? — Kate, my girl, don't mind him. He shall leave to-morrow. (*KATE and MUGGINS go to rear.*) He's probably (*to MRS. H.*) been playing some prank; but it shall be his last one here.

MRS. H. Well, all right; but what — who — Gracious, how I am flustered! Somebody was going to explain something.

FRED (*MOLLIE and he stand in front of MRS. H.*) Yes, aunt: you have been deceived all along. I am your nephew, and this (*to HARRY*) is my chum. We boys changed names. I thought Mollie was to be at Saratoga this summer, and wanted to be there, so got Harry to take my place. So it is all my fault. Now, forgive us once more, and let me introduce your nephew and his *fiancée*.

MRS. H. Why, you take my breath away. Well, I must say — No matter; I forgive you. So this is my nephew and niece! (*Embraces MOLLIE and FRED.*)

HARRY. So, Miss Fanny, you were deceived, after all. (*Aside.*) Gad! so much embracing, and all that sort of thing awakens feelings long dead within me. By Jove! I'll do it. Muggins and Kate shall be the only elements of discord. (*Holds out his hands to FANNY. Aside.*) Wilt thou? and she wilted. (*FANNY comes to him shyly. They go to MRS. H.*)

HARRY. Our turn next, if you please. Your niece and new nephew!

MRS. H. (*completely overcome*). What, you two? Well, who would have thought it? Well — I — yes — I suppose I must. Are there any more?

○
KATE.

○
MUGGINS.

○
MRS. HUNTOON.

R.

○
HARRY
and
FANNY.

○
FRED
and
MOLLIE.

L.

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